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SUBJECT: GOMA NOTES 06/13/08: NAIROBI PROCESS - 26TH MEETING OF THE
JMG TASK FORCE, JUNE 13, 2008, BUKAVU

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The 26th meeting of the Joint Monitoring Group Task Force, held in Bukavu June 13, featured a briefing on FARDC operations against the FDLR by General Patrick Masunzu of the 10th Military Region. Masunzu reported that four newly-deployed integrated and MONUC-trained battalions are focusing on cutting FDLR supply routes. He stressed that he has instructed his commanders to maintain local communities' confidence. The Rwandan delegation expressed appreciation for the level of detail in Masunzu's briefing, but raised concerns about FDLR incursions into Rwanda and FARDC-FDLR collaboration. MONUC's DDRRR and political affairs sections briefed the group on their public awareness campaigns and related issues. MONUC DDRRR has told FDLR commanders that the only way to hold an "inter-Rwandan dialogue" is for the FDLR to return to Rwanda and register as a legitimate political party. End summary.

FARDC briefing

¶2. (SBU) Members of the Nairobi process Joint Monitoring Group Task Force (JMG-TF) traveled June 13 to Bukavu for their 26th session. The meeting began with a briefing on FARDC operations against the FDLR by acting 10th Military Region commander General Patrick Masunzu. The Congolese military has deployed four integrated and MONUC-trained battalions to South Kivu to cut FDLR supply routes. Masunzu described in detail the location of FDLR forces and the weapons available to them.

¶3. (SBU) Masunzu stressed that he has instructed his commanders to avoid any activity that could cause local populations to lose confidence in the FARDC. He said the military has also engaged traditional and religious authorities and other elements of civil society to deliver the message that the FDLR must return to Rwanda and that only the FARDC is responsible for providing security. He claimed that most FDLR fighters want to go back to Rwanda, but are effectively held hostage by their commanders. He appeared to believe that their return would depend on the Rwandan government agreeing to a political ("inter-Rwandan") dialogue with the FDLR.

¶4. (SBU) Major Franco Rutagengwa, head of the Rwandan delegation, expressed appreciation for Masunzu's briefing. He said it contained a level of detail that had not previously been provided by the GDRC. He then raised the issue of FDLR incursions into Rwanda and alleged that certain FARDC brigades are cooperating with the FDLR. Rutagengwa implied that the GDRC is not doing enough to secure the border or mining sites being exploited by the FDLR. He also asked when the FARDC will begin forced disarmament of the FDLR.

¶5. (SBU) Masunzu said he was not aware of FDLR incursions into Rwanda or collaboration with the FARDC. He requested more specific information in order to investigate. He stated that measures are in place to protect the border, but, citing operational security, did not provide specific details. Colonel Augustin Mamba, DRC head of delegation, said that the FARDC is in a phased process of action against the FDLR, and proceeding from one phase to another takes a

certain amount of time.

MONUC DDRRR briefing

16. (SBU) MONUC DDRRR and political affairs sections then briefed the group on public awareness activities and other related issues to follow up the Nairobi communique.

17. (SBU) The DDRRR officer said that MONUC began a robust public awareness campaign in South Kivu in April. This includes active seeking of assistance from political and traditional authorities. He said they are now working in collaboration with the GDRC, an element which he characterized as relatively new.

18. (SBU) MONUC DDRRR is planning a series of events at local markets which FDLR members are known to frequent. The principal focus will be countering the message that those who go back to Rwanda are persecuted. DDRRR representatives have met with FDLR commanders in an effort to influence them along the same lines. They have stressed that the only way to hold an "inter-Rwandan dialogue" is for the FDLR to return to Rwanda and transform itself into a legitimate political party.

19. (SBU) Responding to a question from Mamba, the DDRRR officer said that 255 FDLR members have returned to Rwanda since January, of which 105 were combatants. The Rwandan delegation disputed this figure, leading to agreement to examine the issue further at the next JMG-TF meeting.

MONUC political briefing

KINSHASA 00000555 002 OF 002

10. (SBU) A MONUC political affairs officer provided a general overview of current FDLR activities in South Kivu, including recruitment and stepped-up efforts to dominate strategic areas. He noted that the FDLR began reorganizing its forces following the Nairobi communique more along guerilla lines, with groups of 20-30 fighters patrolling and controlling territories. In some areas, FDLR members are integrated with the community, in others they live in military camps. Civilians in areas under FDLR control appear apprehensive about possible operations against the group. They fear reprisals or being accidentally targeted.

11. (SBU) The officer recommended that: the GDRC increase its public information activities in South Kivu; the international community pressure FDLR leaders in Europe; Rwanda make clear to the FDLR that conditions there are conducive to repatriation; and the threat of military action against the FDLR be intensified.

Comment

12. (SBU) Rutagengwa's effort to express appreciation for Masunzu's briefing was noteworthy. The meeting was otherwise relatively straightforward, with few theatrics or hyperbole by either the Congolese or Rwandan delegations. End comment

GARVELINK